SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

June 15, 1954

TO: The Secretary

FROM: ARA - Mr. Holland

SUBJECT: Draft Press Statement by President on Guatemala

Attached as Tab A is a draft of press conference statement submitted by the CIA to Mr. Hagarty for use at the President's press conference on Wednesday, June 16.

I most vigorously oppose the use of this statement.

Our whole plan for an OAS meeting on Guatemala is based upon the principle that the United States is undertaking to solve this problem without unilateral intervention, whether political or economic, in Guatemalan affairs. I have reiterated this again and again to every Latin American Ambassador and so have our Ambassadors in those capitals.

The CIA very understandably wants to bring both political and economic pressure to bear in Guatemala at this time. From their point of view I can see that this is logical. I object strenuously, however, because by following this course we will demonstrate that our assertions regarding the OAS meeting are not true. On the one hand, we would be avowing a laudable determination to forebear from all unilateral action and, on the other hand, through the President of the United States we would be indulging in the most direct unilateral political intervention.

The results, in my judgment, would be disastrous to our proposed OAS meeting.

Attached as Tab B is as recommended substitute.

ARA:HFHolland:mk

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Mr. Holland said the Secretary saw this memo & papers were left with S/S.

This Document Must Be Returned to C/R Central

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A

SUBJECT: Draft of Possible Press Conference Statement on Guatemala

The current crisis in Guatemala grows out of the attempt to convert its communist infiltrated government into an out-and-out communist dictatorship. A few days ago the regime officially announced the suspension of civil liberties and rounded up many prominent non-communists. Now we hear of an order directing that part of the recent shipment of arms from behind the Iron Curtain is to be distributed to communist cadres. Clearly these moves, all too familiar as steps in a communist takeover, are not being made in response to any external threat. The truth is that they are prompted by the increasing awareness of the communist threat and growing anti-communism of the enormous majority of the Guatemalan people and above all of the Guatemalan army. These same circumstances give us reason to hope and expect that the loyal anti-communists in the country will themselves clean their own house.

B

Events in Guatemala during the past week show a disturbing endeavor to push that country into a Communist dictatorship, of the same type as the Satellites of Eastern Europe. A wave of arrests of anti-Communists, imposition of strict censorship, and exiling of men known as opponents of the Communist gang, are all part of the familiar pattern of repression, preliminary to a Communist seizure of power in other areas of the world.

For some time it has seemed clear to me that the international Communist conspiracy has selected Guatemala as the country best suited to attempt its penetration in this Hemisphere. Constantine Oumansky, one of the Soviet's ablest diplomats, showed the Soviet interest in Guatemala in 1945 when he was Ambassador in Mexico.

The threat to this Hemisphere is very clear and that is why we have been consulting with the other American republics during the past week. We will earnestly seek their views on the course we should adopt to defend this new world from Communist in-roads.